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PRIVATE MEETING OF THE SOCIETY

(to be held in the Library)

Tuesday, 30 August, at 6.30 p.m.

DR IAN FLETCHER

'SOME RECENT EXPERIMENTS IN HYPNOSIS'

Dr Fletcher, who is a member of the Magic Circle, is conducting experiments on the nature of the hypnotic state.

THE APPEAL FOR DONATIONS

THE initial response to the Appeal for annual donations has been most encouraging. Valuable additional income has either been made payable to the Society by standing orders with banks or promised by those members who prefer to make a separate payment each year. In addition, several members have most generously sent special donations.

It cannot be too strongly emphasized that the solution of the Society's financial problem depends on the raising of its *income*. It will therefore be appreciated that donations of however small an amount, on whose regularity the Society can rely, are an important contribution towards solving that problem.

If any members or associates have mislaid the forms recently sent to them, the Secretary will be glad to provide additional copies.

REPORT OF A VISIT TO BROOK HOUSE, FRIMLEY

BY LORD CHARLES HOPE AND MRS FRANK HEYWOOD

WE went to Brook House, Frimley, on 5 February 1949. It is an old white two-storey house, once an inn, with 3 sitting-rooms and 7 bedrooms standing on the main road on the London side of the village. Mrs Eliot, the owner of the house, was present, her twenty-year old daughter Petronilla, and Prince Michael Obolensky. He had had no experience of the haunting.

Mrs Eliot told us she had moved into the house just before the 1939-45 war. She was told it was haunted by the apparition of a white horse which was said to emerge from the stables, but she said the idea had in no way disturbed her or her family, for their old home in the midlands had also been haunted and it was all in the day's work. They had never seen or heard anything of the white horse and she did not appear to take the story at all seriously.

She told us that during the war a Mrs Beeson had rented the house from her and after living there had asked her whether she 'had heard the footsteps'. Mrs Beeson also said that one day a stranger had asked to look over the house, as she had lived there before Mrs Eliot, and that the stranger had asked her whether she 'had heard the haunt'. Mrs Eliot told us that she had often heard footsteps at night but had never troubled to investigate them. It was not until two years ago that anything occurred which it seemed impossible to credit with a normal explanation. At this time, she said, a friend of her daughter's, Michael Ackroyd, aged twenty-four, was sharing the spare bedroom with her nephew, Tony Sheldon. He woke up in the middle of the night and felt there was someone at the foot of the bed, from where he heard the sound of heavy breathing. He turned on the light and found her nephew asleep in the other bed about eighteen inches from him. C. H. saw the room and we ascertained that there were no crows which might have produced a similar sound down the chimney. We could trace no alternative cause for Michael Ackroyd's impression other than his having imagined his own breathing to be coming from the foot of the bed. This seems improbable, for, as will be seen from his account, he appears to have heard it three times and to have got up to try and discover the cause.

Last August Mrs Eliot, her daughter, their old nurse, and a young friend, Miss Angela Haywood-Farmer, were sleeping in the house, all on the same floor. Both Mrs Eliot and Petronilla heard someone walk up the stairs and open a door at some time during the night. Mrs Eliot thought it was Petronilla going around and then going to the spare room to talk to Angela. As the girls had come back late from a dance she remonstrated with her in the morning. Petronilla denied having left her room and said she had heard the steps and thought they were her mother's. Angela was then asked whether she had left her room and said, far from it, for she had been much too frightened. She had heard someone in her room and had then heard heavy breathing at the foot of her bed, at which she had buried her head under the bedclothes. The nurse also vigorously denied

having left her room and said she had heard nothing. It is worth noting that the lavatory is half-way down the stairs, but the Eliots are very emphatic that the old nurse is not in the habit of leaving her room at night. She is terrified of burglars and has had a large bolt fitted to her door and shutters put on her windows. The bedroom doors are close to the staircase and the Eliots say the footsteps were too definite to be attributable to some remote cause. C. H. tested the stairs for creaks and we ascertained that the waterpipes were not in the habit of emitting any kind of spontaneous gurgles at odd times. This was confirmed to Mrs F. H. by a young engineer who had subsequently stayed with the Eliots.

Petronilla told us that Angela had said that she only vaguely remembered having heard about Michael's experience and indeed had thought they had told her that it had occurred *downstairs*. Petronilla added that a local gardener had told her the house was haunted but had given no details. We asked her to try and get details from him, being very careful to give no hint of their own experiences, and also to try and get direct reports from her two friends. Her report of her talk with the gardener and her friends' replies are given below. The Eliots had, unfortunately, lost all touch with Mrs Beeson.

LETTER FROM MISS PETRONILLA ELIOT TO MRS HEYWOOD

DATED 21 FEBRUARY 1949

I enclose Michael Ackroyd's report on hearing the ghost in the bedroom, also part of a letter to me from Angela Haywood-Farmer telling of her experience, which I hope will be of some help. I should like to add that she was sleeping in the same bed as Michael had used when she heard the breathing.

I had a chat with Elsley, the gardener at Frimley Park, who has lived in the village all his life; he had previously mentioned to me that Brook House was haunted, so I asked him in what way. He told me that footsteps were to be heard from time to time during the night in the house, but he could not say when. He added that it was quite a well-known thing among the older village people that the house was haunted in this way, but that he himself did not believe in such things!

It was also from Elsley that I learnt that the previous tenant in Brook House was a Lt-Col Turner in the Cameronians, who he thought had died during the last war. [We have not traced Col. Turner's widow. —C. H., Mrs F. H.]

PART OF LETTER FROM MISS ANGELA HAYWOOD-FARMER
TO MISS PETRONILLA ELIOT

... As for the Ghost, you told me the house was haunted but in what way you did not say other than that someone had heard deep breathing *down stairs*. I heard footsteps; deep breathing and felt the presence of someone at the foot of my bed, not at the time knowing that the same things had been experienced in that room before. How long it went on for I would not know as I retired rapidly beneath the bedclothes having been unable to come to a logical conclusion as to how or why you or your mother would get into my room without opening the door!!!

Also, I then remembered you saying something about the house being haunted but only by, as you put it, a friendly ghost. . . .

STATEMENT BY MR MICHAEL ACKROYD DATED 12 FEBRUARY 1949

The events which I am about to relate occurred some time ago and I cannot be absolutely certain as to the exact details and date, but after much searching of diaries I am inclined to think that it happened on the night of Saturday, 12 April 1947, or to be more precise in the small hours of Sunday morning.

I had been invited down to Brook House to spend the weekend. I arrived in time for lunch on the Saturday and put my baggage in the spare bedroom—a room, I may add, in which I had slept on at least one previous occasion without any untoward events. There are two beds in the spare room and I occupied the bed nearest the window. The other bed near the door was later occupied by Tony Sheldon.

That evening we dined at Brook House and then went out to a dance and returned at about one o'clock. We had a nightcap in the drawing-room and retired to our rooms at about 1.30 a.m. Tony Sheldon and I got into bed fairly quickly and gossiped for a short time before turning out the bed-side lamp, which was on a small table separating our respective beds. T. S. went to sleep almost at once, but I remained awake for some time. I cannot now remember if I did in fact doze off and was woken up or whether I remained awake the whole time, but whichever it was my next recollection is quite clear. I was lying in bed wide awake with all senses on the alert. (I should perhaps mention that I am a very light sleeper and that any unusual noise, however, slight, will always wake me up. I can sleep quite well through noise, provided that it remains constant and does not vary in pitch or intensity. In other words I can sleep in a railway train whilst it is moving fast, but as soon as it slows up for a station the sound of the wheels changes and I am instantly awake.)

However, to get back to the night in question, I was wide awake and conscious that something in the room had occurred to disturb my rest. I could not at first account for it and lay still listening. Then I suddenly realised what it was. There was deep breathing coming from the foot of my bed. My first reaction was to suppose that T. S. was out of his bed and was standing near the end of mine. I lay listening to it for a few moments and then realised with something of a shock that I could hear breathing coming also from the other bed. I remained silent and listening for perhaps about two minutes, trying to account for the breathing which I could still hear quite distinctly from the foot of my bed, and the breathing from the bed next to me. However, I couldn't find an explanation so I put out my hand and switched on the light. Immediately the noise at the end of the bed stopped and on sitting up I saw T. S. still in bed and asleep. He moved restlessly as the light disturbed him but he did not wake up. I kept the light on for a minute and glanced round. The room seemed very cold but I could see nothing unusual so I turned out the light and disappeared under the bedclothes, wondering if it was just my imagination, but before many minutes had passed I

heard it again. There could be no mistake about it. The noise of deep breathing was absolutely clear and was considerably more audible than that of T. S. in the next bed. This time I listened for a considerable time, probably between 8 to 10 minutes, before moving my arm stealthily out towards the light switch.

On went the light; the breathing stopped instantly. I sat bolt upright in bed and looked around again, but as before the room was empty except for Tony and myself. I wondered if anyone could have possibly concealed himself in one of the cupboards, so I slipped out of bed and had a thorough look including a glance under each of the beds! The result was nil. Having got back into bed I thought about it for some time and then decided I would ask Tony if he could account for it in any way, so I called out to him several times and eventually he woke up sufficiently to hear what I was saying, but his only reply, couched in somewhat unparliamentary language, threw no light on the problem, so I did not pursue the subject any further, but turned out the light and tried to go to sleep. This I eventually managed, but not before I had heard the mysterious breathing start up again. This third and last time I did not turn the light on, but just stayed listening to it till I eventually dropped off to sleep.

I have since been asked if, before the time of hearing the breathing, I had been told that the house was haunted, but I'm afraid I just can't give an accurate answer. I know we had often discussed ghosts in the past, but I have no idea if I had then been told that Brook House was haunted. Certainly, I was told rather a vague story about a white horse, but I am inclined to think that I only heard it after I had heard the nocturnal breathing.

CORROBORATION OF MR ACKROYD'S STATEMENT BY MR SHELDON

On the occasion reported by Michael Ackroyd, I remember being awakened by him and asked whether I could hear heavy breathing. I heard nothing, and went to sleep again at once.

On another occasion, sleeping in the same room alone, I woke up one night and was under the impression that I did hear heavy breathing, but this, of course, may have been suggestion from the previous episode.

It will be seen that the testimony of each witness taken separately can to a certain extent be discounted. We can say that Mrs Eliot had been told by Mrs Beeson that footsteps had been heard. We may presume she told her daughter. We cannot be sure that the evidence given by Mrs Beeson and the stranger are independent, for although the Eliots think Mrs Beeson had heard the footsteps before the stranger's visit, this cannot be confirmed by Mrs Beeson. Michael Ackroyd cannot be sure that he heard about a ghost *after* his experience, though he seems to think that in any case he only heard about a white horse. He evidently did not think that the heavy breathing in his bedroom was produced by a horse. Angela had heard of Michael's experience although she thought it was downstairs. There is no absolute evidence that the sound of the footsteps heard by the three ladies was the same sound. The two Eliots may both have chosen the same night to be stimulated by subconscious memory of Mrs Beeson's story into

imagining they heard footsteps. It may have been coincidence that Angela chose the same night to imagine she heard the same heavy breathing that Michael had heard, as she thought, downstairs ; and a further coincidence that she added some footsteps. (It is interesting that the Eliots appear to have heard the door open but Angela did not.) So this hypothesis seems to need four chance coincidences and the curious fact that people so unmoved by a possible ghost that for years they did not bother to investigate the footsteps so long as a normal explanation was conceivable, chose the same night, years after Mrs Beeson's story, to be subjectively affected by it. Further, Michael heard the breathing three times and was alert enough during his experience to get up and try to trace its cause, to speak of it to his companion, and to notice that he heard two breathings simultaneously. It is incidentally of interest that here is yet another case in which the percipient of an apparent ghost comments on the coldness of the atmosphere. Finally, the footsteps were independently confirmed by the gardener.

We are putting up this case, which we are aware is far from perfect, for comment by members of the Society. To what extent should such evidence be ignored, and to what extent should the hypotheses of subjective hallucination and chance-coincidence be stretched to cover cases like this?

EXPERIMENTAL RESEARCH AND THE STUDY OF SPONTANEOUS CASES

BY R. H. THOULESS

THERE is no more trivial dispute in psychical research than that between the supporters of quantitative experimental studies and those who favour the study of spontaneous cases. My opinion on that dispute is still the same as the one I expressed in my Presidential Address to the Society in 1942 : 'The choice is not between statistics and experiment on the one hand and observation of spontaneous cases on the other. Let us have much more of both.' Any particular psychical researcher is likely to specialise in one field or the other since our interests are limited and still more seriously the time we can give to psychical research is limited. But the fact that I prefer to do experiments is no reason for me to express the opinion that this is an activity better worth while than going to mediums or visiting haunted houses. It is my job in psychical research, and I have reason to be grateful that other people are willing to do the jobs that interest me less. I have not more ground for quarrelling with the man whose interest in psychical research is in materialised spirits than I have for quarrelling with those research scientists who find nuclear fission or organic compounds of sulphur as interesting as I find psi phenomena. Also, I have no more ground for quarrelling with the student of spontaneous phenomena than I have with the experimentalist who is interested in other directions of experimentation than those that interest me. We all

ought to be able to pursue our own restricted line of interests without the support of the paranoid idea that this alone is important.

A question less easy to decide is the respective roles of experiment and observation in psychical research. They are plainly not the same, and frustration of effort may result from trying to use either method for the tasks which are better performed by the other. What follows is my own view of their respective roles, supported so far as possible by consideration of what have proved to be their appropriate tasks in other sciences.

The first and most obvious role of observation of spontaneous cases is to explore those regions of psychical research into which experimental methods have not yet penetrated. These are so many that no experimentalist should make light of the task of observation. They include apparitions, hauntings, poltergeist phenomena, levitations, out-of-the-body experiences, the evil eye, and so on. It is not even unlikely that the range of experimentally unexplored regions of psychical phenomena will increase in the future.

It may, however, be asked whether the task of observation in such regions is merely that of a preliminary exploration of phenomena which will one day be brought under experimental control, or whether it is also to provide evidence in these fields. I think it is both. Experimentalists are sometimes pessimistic about the value of the evidence for such spontaneous phenomena as apparitions. I think this pessimism is the result of applying inappropriate criteria of evidence to such cases. If we ask whether the evidence is so strong that it would be irrational to deny the reality of apparitions of the dead, the answer must be that it is not and that from the nature of the case it is unlikely that it ever will be until (if ever) we can produce apparitions of the departed at will in the laboratory and study their objectivity at leisure. But this is not the only question it is reasonable to ask. We can also ask whether the evidence is such that to an impartial judgment it seems much more likely that there are apparitions of the dead than not. I think that the evidence does reach the level required for such a judgment; even if it did not, there is obviously no reason why it should not do so if future cases were found better attested than those of the past.

The provision of evidence in cases where experimental confirmation is not yet possible is not, however, the sole use of observation of spontaneous cases. Such observations may also be made the foundation for the theoretical effort to systematise and to explain what happens. Mr Tyrell's treatment of apparitions is a good example of the possibility of finding order and system in the data of spontaneous cases. No doubt the systematisation will be better and the explanation more adequate if in the future we can subject such data to experimental treatment. That, however, is no reason for not reducing the data as it stands to such order as we find possible.

I know that some psychical researchers believe that we can also usefully theorise on spontaneous cases in regions in which experimental study is also possible (such as E.S.P.). With this opinion I cannot agree. Theoretical questions are so much more easily dealt with by experimental methods that where these are available it seems a waste of time to theorise on an observational foundation. On the other hand, observations provide a

starting point for experiments. This is their third use. Questions may be asked about observational material which can be answered by experiment. Such questions are, for example, as to whether the presence of a piece of knowledge in some other person's mind is a necessary condition for a psi cognition (*i.e.* whether in Rhine's sense of the word, there is 'clairvoyance' as well as 'telepathy') and whether precognition is more accurate over a short period of time than a longer one. To hope that such questions will be answered by observation is to hope that Nature will arrange the conditions for answering the question and one may have to wait a very long time. It is easier to arrange the required conditions for oneself in the laboratory. But in suggesting problems for experimental investigation, observation still has a part to play in such matters as E.S.P. which are already studied in the laboratory. New questions for laboratory investigation may be suggested by new observations of spontaneous cases of telepathy, clairvoyance, or precognition.

The first great advantage of laboratory experimentation is the possibility of giving evidence of paranormal phenomena of a kind more coercive than can be obtained by observation and whose degree of coerciveness may be numerically assessed. Many people consider that the reality of telepathy was convincingly proved by observational data before satisfactory experiments had been performed. But there is a difference of opinion about this and it would not be wholly irrational, although perhaps ill judged, to attribute all the observational data on telepathy to mistaken observation and selection of chance coincidences. Such explanations cannot reasonably be given of, let us say, the results of the Soal-Goldney experiments on Basil Shackleton. Even more obvious is the case of psycho-kinesis in normal persons, the evidence for which rests entirely on experimental data.

There seems to be an opinion among some psychical researchers that this is the sole function of quantitative experiment. If it were, the experimenters might now regard their work in these fields as done. But in other sciences the importance of quantitative methods of experiment is not merely to provide evidence of facts otherwise doubtful but to discover interrelations between facts and to discover the concepts necessary for a theoretical understanding of them.

Thus it was not the task of experimental physics to provide evidence that ice melted when put into hot water; that was already known by observation. The experimentalist had to discover the laws of this melting and to measure how much ice was melted when the hot water was cooled to a certain amount, and so he was led to the concept of latent heat which would have been very unlikely to be derived from mere observation. Similarly, it was not the fact of refraction of light, of attraction of magnets, etc., that had to be established but their numerical laws and the concepts of refractive index and magnetic permeability.

So quantitative experiment in psychical research is to be regarded as not merely a way of providing evidence of phenomena whose existence might otherwise be doubted but as a means of establishing laws of psychical phenomena and of deriving concepts in terms of which those laws can be stated. We are no longer concerned with producing evidence that psi phenomena exist but with determining under what conditions they take place. To do this we must abandon the mere aim of accumulating positive

results under favourable conditions and instead vary our conditions in order to discover when they do and when they do not take place. That is the experimental task of the present. In another ten years experimental study should have given us a much better idea of the basic laws of psi phenomena and of the concepts required for the statement of those laws.

But are those concepts to come solely from experimental investigation without consideration of spontaneous cases of psi phenomena? I think the answer is 'Yes'. Of course, no theoretical formulation can afford to neglect the facts observed in spontaneous cases, but in the regions where experiment has been developed, these must merely be the starting-point of experiments and not themselves independent data for theory. This is for the reason already given, because crucial issues can be decided with much more precision by experiment than by observation. Observation of falling bodies had given a law about their velocities of falling before anyone experimented but the law was proved to be inaccurate by experimentation. The concept of 'force' was current before physicists had made measurements of accelerations and their relations to mass, but the concept was confused until experimental measurement had separated the concepts of 'energy', 'momentum', and 'force' from that confusion. Similarly, observation of chemical bodies had distinguished the elements of 'earth', 'air', 'fire', and 'water', but these were not the elements which experimental study afterwards revealed.

There is no sense in trying to work with the concepts provided by observation in psychical research in those fields in which the much more precise method of determining concepts by experimental research is possible. In those fields in which experimental research is not yet possible, we have no choice; we must use the concepts provided by observation. But even here we must regard these as provisional, ultimately to be corrected by experimental investigation when that becomes possible.

I should like to end as I began by pointing out that there is plenty of room for more and better work both in spontaneous observation and in quantitative experimentation. Each has its part to play in the development of psychical research, but these parts are somewhat different.

THE VALUE OF REPORTS OF SPONTANEOUS PSI EXPERIENCES¹

BY PROFESSOR J. B. RHINE

RESEARCH in parapsychology, as in most fields, had its roots in natural events which occurred non-experimentally, that is, spontaneously. Reports of phenomena of thought transference and clairvoyance stimulated the earlier explorers to look for experimental evidence of these capacities, and the character of the phenomena determined the kind of experiments that followed. For example, if a case of telepathy occurred in a demonstration of hypnosis, subsequent experiments would naturally involve the hypnotic state, at least for a time. Or, if the spontaneous phenomenon

¹ Reproduced from the December 1948 issue of the *Journal of Parapsychology* by permission of Professor Rhine.

seemed to involve clairvoyance, the experiments were based on clairvoyance tests. Even the individual subjects used in the early experiments were discovered through their non-experimental experience of the abilities in question.

The value of these spontaneous cases obviously lay in the start and direction they gave to experimental investigation, and the importance of these functions can hardly be exaggerated. The cases did not, however, in themselves constitute adequate evidence of any form of extrasensory perception; if they had, further experimental work would not have been needed. As it was, the conclusions eventually reached by scientists regarding the occurrence of telepathy or clairvoyance rested entirely on evidence gained from the experiments to which the case material had been a stimulus.

Unfortunately the importance of this restriction of the role of spontaneous cases has not been generally recognized, and therefore this material has often been miscast as evidence of the abilities involved. Because of the elusive nature of E.S.P. phenomena, it has not been easy to follow up experiences with experiments which would produce evidential results on demand. Accordingly there has been a great deal of effort to recruit and dress up these spontaneous experiences themselves as evidence of reliable character, but all attempts to authenticate the reports well enough to allow reliable conclusions to be drawn have been comparatively unsuccessful. The result of this abuse of the case report has been a misunderstanding of its true significance and usefulness. In consequence the value placed on case reports in parapsychology underwent a decline, and they have been pretty well ignored in recent decades.

If, however, the spontaneous experience can be given its proper role, it can play a great part in the researches ahead, perhaps a crucially important one. Such material can help us to initiate new experimental approaches, not any longer to establish psi, but to find out more about what it is and how it operates. And once we abandon all interest in using these experiences as evidence of psi capacities, we have available a wealth of case data which would otherwise be ignored. If we use case reports only to give us suggestions for new experimental projects, it becomes relatively unimportant whether or not supporting affidavits are available in the record, whether any witnesses were present, or what the education or standing of the percipient or reporter. In any right view of the matter, a spontaneous case can serve to contribute a hypothesis, raise a question, or furnish a possible insight, but it cannot go far beyond this point. Since all these hypotheses, questions, and insights will have to be subjected to crucial experimental tests before any conclusion is reached, the demands of authentication that have been the bugbear of case studies in parapsychology are seen at once to be largely irrelevant.

The worst thing then that could possibly happen for giving undue consideration to an unsound case report would be that it would lead to an experiment that would yield no confirmatory results. The odds are very strong, however, against any single case ever leading to an actual experiment. No experimenter is likely to be carried so far by an unsupported case. He will, however, be led to look for more cases of the same general type, and, if he finds enough others to support it in the particular sugges-

tion it makes regarding the nature of psi, he would be warranted in conducting a crucial test of the hypotheses. We may expect a great deal of extraneous and erroneous material in any case collection, but the worthless and misleading elements will likely not compound in the course of the analyses. They are likely rather to be screened out, while the true characteristics will recur from case to case, sufficiently for our purposes of acquiring new leads to better researches.

In the early case studies (until the question of spirit agency came into dominance) the primary interest in mind was the question of the occurrence of E.S.P., mainly of telepathy. But, as always happens, the experiments restricted the natural function under investigation, and the subsequent research developments became increasingly narrowed and specialized as the controls were increased. In time the experimenters got far away from the original phenomena and may have lost a great deal of what was represented in the pre-experimental manifestations.

Ideally, the types of spontaneous experiences that initiated experimentation ought to have been kept in perspective throughout the course of the research. As it is, they have been neglected, and we must now go back to them again for a fresh outlook. And while we are no longer concerned with the original problem of psi occurrence, the very same types of experiences that led to the original experiments in telepathy and clairvoyance may now be of service again in giving us clues as to the nature of these capacities. We cannot, in fact, conceive of a richer source of suggestions as to the way in which the psi processes may best be approached and studied. We may well count upon the ability to give itself away more revealingly in its non-experimental manifestations than in anything which we could hope at this stage to demonstrate in the laboratory.

Accordingly, it is one of the most urgent needs of our research field that we turn back to these natural springs of research ideas and draw upon them to the fullest extent. The realization of the importance of this source material has for some time motivated a study of cases at the Parapsychology Laboratory at Duke under the direction of Dr Louisa E. Rhine, and reports of this study will be forthcoming in due time. The general plan of the programme is now fairly well drawn up; the first step has already been taken, that of setting up certain general categories representing the major problems confronting us in parapsychology today. Now, as the reports of psi experiences come in, they are classified and indexed under one or more of these categories according to their bearing. (Only the obviously worthless reports are rejected.) After a given collection is large enough to justify study, those who are concerned with a particular research problem can find already assembled for them such case material as bears upon their special interest.

In going to work upon this material, each research worker will, of course, wish to classify the cases in his category still further, using headings related to his own scientific needs. On every main problem being dealt with there are many subordinate questions, and a further analysis will have to be made to break down the material of a given category into subdivisions related to these questions. The result may be that, let us say, a group of fifty cases are available that bear on a given question confronting the individual research worker, with perhaps half that number (or fewer)

actually contributing meaningful material. From a study of these cases one can count on getting at least a little new direction for his thinking, and perhaps a genuine reorientation toward his problem. In any event he cannot be seriously misled.

There are ways, too, of making this case analysis method a still more fruitful one. For example, if a number of large collections can be made and analyzed on similar lines, the results from one collection may be used to check against those of another. If a research suggested on the basis of one collection gets support from another one consisting of independent cases, it is in a much stronger position indeed. Any project that would involve heavy research effort and expenditure might have special need of such support.

One further point is evident. The job of making adequately large collections and of sifting, sorting, and breaking down the material into usable form is an enormous undertaking. It is too much for one laboratory, as such laboratories are staffed today. It is the kind of project that requires large resources that would permit it to be farmed out for the co-operation of a number of qualified collaborators. We dare not wait, of course, for such an ideal situation before we begin. In fact everyone capable of any sort of activity in parapsychological work can be of help in the collecting and forwarding of spontaneous cases as he may encounter them to the laboratories where they will be preserved and studied. Every reader who appreciates the importance of such case reports can himself become a collection agent for this source material on which the guiding insights for the research of the future may greatly depend.

THE DUKE SURVEY OF SPONTANEOUS CASE REPORTS¹

BY DR LOUISA E. RHINE

REPORTS of spontaneous psychic occurrences do not in themselves constitute data upon which to base conclusions. Nevertheless, a survey of such reports can give many helpful suggestions to the experimentalist, as, for example, in studying the nature of psi and its relation to consciousness. In experimental work, E.S.P. seems to operate on the unconscious level so that the percipient does not know which of his responses is right. Of course, it is highly desirable to find some way of raising the process to the conscious level, for only so is there much hope of learning to control it. For if it is a necessarily unconscious process, there wouldn't be much chance of doing that.

A survey of spontaneous case reports, however, gives much encouragement on this point. For in these reports we find what seems to be a much greater range in degree of consciousness of the E.S.P. impression than occurs in experimental work. While we do find much evidence that the impression has difficulty in crossing the threshold into consciousness, just as shown in the laboratory, we have in addition the testimony of many cases which seem to fall at the two extremes.

¹ This contribution to the Symposium of the Society for Parapsychology, Washington, D.C., held in that city last year, is reproduced by permission of Dr Rhine from the March 1949 issue of the *Journal of Parapsychology*.

First, showing least consciousness and most fragmentation of the E.S.P. impression, there is the type of case which we call blocking, in which nothing specific whatever gets over the threshold. The percipient experiences a vague unrest, or depression, or other appropriate emotional state or impulse to act, but does not even know to whom or to what his experience applies. Then, linking this type up with the more intermediate degrees of fragmentation, we find cases where the only conscious knowledge which comes through is the identity of the person involved. Following these, we have practically all stages up to the opposite extreme, which consists of the cases which show what we call conviction. In these, knowledge seems to cross the threshold into consciousness practically in entirety, and sometimes with such conviction of its validity to the percipient as to warrant a radical course of action based upon it.

And so from the survey of cases, we feel encouraged to think that the E.S.P. process is not necessarily an unconscious one, and that, therefore, there is a possibility of learning what its barriers to consciousness are, and so, how to remove them.

There is something also to be gained from surveying the manner in which the emergence into consciousness seems to be accomplished. Such a survey soon shows that processes already familiar to general psychology are common.

For example, we find cases where the association of some object or situation present in the environment of the percipient seems to make the emergence of the E.S.P. impression easier, just as it sometimes does in the familiar process of recall in memory.

We find also some of the devices familiar in ordinary dreams. An outstanding one of these is dramatization. In this, the incoming knowledge is acted out as on a stage. This may occur in the waking state as well, but in that state it seems to be more common to have the knowledge come to consciousness via the process we call symbolization. An omen or sign of some sort is experienced which conveys, by inference, the truth that is having difficulty of entrance. This sort of symbolization, of course, does occur in dreams also, but thus far in our study it seems to occur more frequently in waking experiences, and the dramatization more frequently in dreams. It will be interesting to see how far this difference holds as the study progresses.

Among other suggestions we are finding is that sometimes a definite disguising of the incoming impression seems to occur, as if to shield the percipient from shock. This, too, of course, is familiar in ordinary dreams, although in the spontaneous psychic occurrence it seems to occur either in waking experiences or in dreams.

All these types of processes, and others, and combinations of them are well represented in reports of spontaneous occurrences which show them as a part of the normal cognitive system, so that even in our initial studies, it looks more and more as if psi is lawfully interrelated with processes more familiar to orthodox psychology.

These are a few samples of the first fruits of our study of spontaneous cases—a study, we think, which may help us still further in an understanding of the nature of psi.

REVIEWS

THE TWO BROTHERS. By Canon A. F. Webling. Leicester, Edmund Ward, 1948. 230 pp. Illus. 10s. 6d.

PRECOGNITION AND HUMAN SURVIVAL. By the Rev. C. Drayton Thomas. London, Psychic Press. 115 pp. 5s.

Canon Webling's account of communications from his twin sons, one of whom died in infancy, and the other during the recent war, will be read with sympathetic interest on account of the author's sincerity and his reverent approach to the problems of modern mediumship. Among these must nowadays be reckoned a spread of re-incarnationist doctrine that cannot fail to be embarrassing to a sitter nurtured in traditional Christian beliefs.

The same spirit of sincerity pervades Mr Drayton Thomas's book, which in addition gives abundant proof of the author's long familiarity with psychical research, and with the evidence, spontaneous and experimental as well as mediumistic, relating to precognition. Mr Thomas classifies his material under various heads, according to the nature and extent of the discarnate activity to which, in his view, the evidence points and thus focuses the reader's attention on several aspects of a problem which cannot be viewed from too many angles.

Both books give instances of forecasts of important public events. It would be interesting to compare the forecasts through as many mediums as possible of events during the years immediately preceding the recent war with a view to ascertaining the agreements and differences between them, and how far these depended on the individuality of the mediums' communications, and sitters concerned.

W. H. S.

THE JOURNAL OF PARAPSYCHOLOGY, Vol. XIII, No. 1, March 1949
Durham, N.C., Duke University Press. \$1.25.

This number of the *Journal of Parapsychology* is devoted to the Symposium on Parapsychology held last year in Washington, D.C. The possibility of holding such a symposium and the high level of contributions and discussions are evidence of the vitality of experimental parapsychology in the United States.

Dr Greville discussed the statistical methods used in parapsychology. Dr Pratt gives an account of the curves of performance in E.S.P. and P.K. experiments and discusses their relationship to curves obtained in the study of performances in normal psychology. Dr Schmeidler gives an interesting account of the experimental evidence she has obtained for some of the findings of the Rorschach test of personality being indication of psi capacity. It is unfortunate that she establishes this conclusion by the method of comparing the mean scores of her two groups whereas what is required is a comparison of the number of high-scoring subjects in the two groups for which the appropriate method is a four-fold contingency table tested for significance by the χ^2 method. The same criticism applies also to Dr Humphrey's very interesting account of the important work that has been done on the relation between psi success and expansiveness and compressiveness in drawing.

The afternoon session was devoted to a discussion on the nature of psi processes, opened by Professor Rhine. This very interesting number of the Journal closes with an address by our President, Professor Gardner Murphy, on 'The Place of Parapsychology among the Sciences'.

R. H. THOULESS

PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

Professor Gardner Murphy delivered his Presidential Address at 6.30 p.m. on Wednesday, 8 June, at the English-Speaking Union. His subject was 'Psychical Research and Human Personality'.

The Society greatly appreciates Professor Murphy's courtesy in making a special visit to Europe to give his address. Before it was delivered, a Reception was held which gave many members the opportunity of meeting Professor Murphy personally.

The Address will be published in *Proceedings*.

EXTRAORDINARY GENERAL MEETING

The Extraordinary General Meeting of Members convened for Monday, 30 May 1949, at 2.30 p.m. was held at 31 Tavistock Square, London, W.C. 1. Lord Charles Hope was in the chair. There were also present: Mrs Goldney, Miss Harding, Miss Jephson, Mrs Morley-Pegge, Mr Nicol, Mr Parsons, Mr Salter, Mrs Salter, Admiral Strutt, and Dr West.

The Notice convening the Meeting was read by the Secretary. The Hon. Secretary, Mr Salter, made a short explanatory statement regarding the proposed Resolution, and a discussion followed in which Mrs Goldney, Mr Parsons, and Mrs Salter took part. The following Special Resolution was moved and was passed by the requisite majority, eight of those present voting for it and one against it:

That the Articles of Association of the Incorporated Society for Psychical Research be altered by adding after Article 38A the following new Article, namely:

38B. By virtue of Sub-Section 7 (a) of Section 185 of the Companies Act 1948, Sub-Sections 1 to 6 (inclusive) of that Section shall not have effect, and accordingly no person shall be disqualified from being appointed as a Member of the Council and no Member of the Council shall be required to retire from that office by reason only of the fact that he has attained the age of 70 years.

Forms for the registration of proxy votes had been circulated to all Members. 288 were returned, of which 4 were against the Resolution. Only one was signed over a penny stamp, as the law still requires, although a provision of the Finance Bill now before Parliament makes that unnecessary. The unstamped forms were therefore invalid.

INSTITUT METAPSYCHIQUE INTERNATIONAL

NOTE ON RESEARCH OFFICER'S VISIT

On Monday, 2 May, the Research Officer paid a visit to the Institut Métapsychique International in Paris. He was courteously received by a member of their Council, M. René Hardy, who is a consultant engineer.

M. Hardy discussed the affairs of the Institute and expressed a wish that there should be co-operation between our two organizations. He made it clear that the French would be only too glad to co-operate in any way that would be helpful to us.

During the conversation M. Hardy explained that in France there was the same lack of interesting psychical material available to research which has repeatedly been deplored in this country. He said that in spite of improved apparatus for the investigation of physical mediums there was no one who could be seriously considered as a successor to Rudi Schneider.

The Journal of the Institut Métapsychique International, entitled *Revue Métapsychique*, is again appearing quarterly and is available in the library.

The President is Docteur F. Mutier, Laboratory Director of the Faculty of Medicine in Paris, and the Secretary-General is M. Marcel Osty, son of the late Dr Eugène Osty whose book *Supernormal Faculties in Man* is well known to English readers.

CORRESPONDENCE

PRECOGNITIVE DREAMS AND THE DUNNE EFFECT

SIR,—While completely agreeing with Mr Scott (*Journal*, Vol. XXXV, No. 651, p. 45) that my method of checking pure chance influences in precognitive dream experiments is far from being the right one, and that my way of selecting traces of precognition (or even fragmentary resemblances of all kinds) from records of a dream series is tainted to a certain degree by subjective judgment, I feel I ought to state at the present stage of the debate that I have fully dealt with Mr Scott's criticism in my articles on 'Dunne-effect of Toeval?' (Precognition or Chance?) which appeared in the Netherlands *Tijdschrift voor Parapsychologie*, Vols. VIII, IX, XI, and XII.

It goes without saying I took such elementary precautions as Mr Scott suggests I might have overlooked, and that resemblances having causal connections with previous dreams, or having common roots in situations of the past, were not entered at all in the list of possible traces of precognition, for precognition is the least plausible explanation of future resemblances. When either Dr Kooy or I was in any doubt about the possibility of such a connection, the resemblance was ruled out as well. My own criticism of the checking method employed (a long interval superposed on the original short one) runs closely parallel with Mr Scott's objection and may be found *in extenso* in my third *Tijdschrift* article (Vol. XI, pp. 173-82), together with an analysis of many other technical and psychological difficulties likely to crop up during the control period.

As for Mr Scott's quite sensible remark that 'after a very long interval the dreamer's circumstances will have altered so much that a dream based on the circumstances of the few days that immediately preceded it will stand a far smaller chance of being fulfilled', I may state that I have raised this objection myself in my apology for choosing the long-interval control system. However, having been a solicitor in quite a small and outlying village for over twenty-four years, my mode of life has hardly altered during any three years' interval (before the German occupation, that is)

and, as I said before, all trivial resemblances suspected of having any common relation to everyday life have been ruled out altogether.

Regarding the moot point, I think I can clear up matters in the easiest way by quoting literally part of the English summary to my third paper :

... three methods of distributing the total number of already completed records for comparison with a new range of events are described :

(1) Drawing lots for the records supposed to be written down after each separate night (pure chance).

(2) Running through the completed series in the reverse direction, from the present day to about three years ago. (Congruencies appearing during the first forty-five days should be regarded as Dunne effects in the orthodox sense, the time limit throughout the trial series being ninety days).

(3) Using the original series again in its chronological order.

No. 1 method is rejected chiefly for technical reasons, among them constant needless nosing in a litter of papers. No. 2 is likely, as well as No. 1, to contain too many discrepancies between the seasons (for instance, a record of January is 'forced into correlation' with an event occurring in July) and therefore to limit the opportunities of chance unfairly. It is pointed out, however, that No. 2 has several attractive features justifying its being put into practice.

No. 3 system is preferred for its simplicity.

Controlling all records by one or more of the described methods will of course necessitate three years' constant survey. Afterwards, the *highly debatable evidence furnished by statistical methods* [the italics are mine] may be checked against the circumstantial evidence gathered from the control series, and comparison between results of the original and the control series will constitute further proof of the relative value of the former.

This was written in 1937. I would like to remind members of the British S.P.R. that I have never professed to have found an infallible method for proving or disproving precognition in dreams ; the phenomenon merely happens to interest me. As for irrefutable evidence, I have never claimed this distinction for any results of my investigation, nor has Dr Kooy. No legal or laboratory standards have been observed, as we both considered them unnecessary, and so—to the best of my beliefs—did Dr Tenhaeff. Why? Because everybody can repeat the experiment, and have his own way about pinning down chance results, for which there are several methods besides the three I have mentioned in my third paper. Mr Dalton, of Donnybrook, Dublin, for instance, has found a quite serviceable quantitative system (cf. 'Sporen van Precognitie in Dromen'—*Traces of Precognition in Dreams*—in the March 1949 issue of the *Tijdschrift*). If Mr Scott is right in describing my method of dealing with the problem by rule of thumb as 'an encouraging movement away from the wrong method', I sincerely hope others will try to improve the way of checking as well as the mode of selection and standardising.

Yours, etc.,

J. C. M. KRUISINGA
Vriezenveen, Holland.

FORMATION OF LOCAL GROUPS

SIR,—Mr Nisbet's suggestions for the encouragement of more practical participation in psychical research on the part of members and your expressed readiness to adopt them which appeared in the March-April issue are excellent. Had they been adopted earlier Mr Nisbet would have known that a local group had been formed in his own town.

Our local Association is now in process of entering upon what promises to prove a healthy and flourishing adolescence. A few details of its launching may be of interest to others with a similar object in mind.

When I took up residence in Hove late in 1948 I knew no one in the town. Your Secretary kindly supplied me with a list of local members, numbering half-a-dozen, but I could enlist positive support from no more than two of these. I had no financial backers. However, I decided that success on so meagre a foundation, could it be achieved, might usefully demonstrate to other would-be group organisers, similarly placed, what could be accomplished.

After a few weeks' preparatory work our fledgling group—the Psychical Research Association—announced its first lecture by Dr D. J. West entitled 'The Scientific Attitude to Survival', hoping that the effort would attract sufficient attention to enable us successfully to establish the Association. Our entire initial outlay, which also covered the cost of the lecture, was around £15. There were nearly 150 people present at the first lecture and the receipts therefrom covered about half of our total expenditure. In addition, we secured sufficient membership subscriptions to assure several month's successful working. These results were well in advance of our most optimistic expectations.

A description of the technique followed would be too lengthy for inclusion here, but the foregoing should suffice to show that the formation of local groups need entail neither exorbitant expenditure of time nor money. Should any member desiring to follow suit wish for fuller information I would be glad to supply it on request.

In conclusion, I wish to express my indebtedness both to Dr West, who so admirably adapted his material to the palate of our somewhat difficult local audience, and also to Major H. V. Barker, Hon. Secretary to the Manchester Society for Psychical Research, who so generously gave me guidance from his own encyclopaedic experience.

Yours etc.,

P. SEWARD,

Beeches, Mallory Road, Hove, Sussex.

MEETINGS OF COUNCIL AND COMMITTEES

THE 446th Meeting of the Council was held at 31 Tavistock Square, London, W.C.1, on Thursday, 24 March 1949, at 3 p.m., PROFESSOR E. R. DODDS in the Chair. The Minutes of the last two meetings of the Council were read and signed as correct. Eleven new Members were elected. Their names and addresses are given below.

The 447th Meeting of the Council was held at 31 Tavistock Square, London, W.C.1, on Monday, 25 April 1949, at 6 p.m., ADMIRAL THE HON. A. C. STRUTT (Hon. Treasurer) in the Chair. The Minutes of the last meeting of the Council were read and signed as correct. Fifteen new Members were elected. Their names and addresses are given below.

The Library and Publicity Committees for the current year were elected as follows :

Library Committee : The Hon. Mrs Gay, Mrs Frank Heywood, Mr J. Fraser Nicol, Admiral the Hon. A. C. Strutt (*ex-officio*), Mr. G. N. M. Tyrrell, and Dr D. J. West (convener).

Publicity Committee : Mr Edward Osborn, Mr Denys Parsons (convener), Mr R. W. S. Pollard, and Mrs A. W. Stevens.

The newly constituted Library Committee held its first meeting at 6 p.m. on Tuesday, 10 May 1949. A thorough examination of the present arrangements for the acquisition and cataloguing of books and periodicals was carried out, and plans were drawn up which should ensure that all new publications of interest to the Society are added to the Library.

MEETINGS OF THE SOCIETY

THE 208th Private Meeting of the Society was held on Saturday, 23 April 1949, at 2.30 p.m., when a paper entitled 'Is a Scientific Approach to Psychical Research desirable and possible?' was read by Mr C. S. Scott.

NEW MEMBERS

(Elected 24 March 1949)

BESSEMANS, PROFESSOR J. F. A. ALBERT, Kluyskens Street 21, Ghent, Belgium.

DAVIES, D. RAYMOND, B.A., 74 Bath Road, Melksham, Wilts.

FOLLETT, MRS D. M., Rockbeare Manor, Devon.

GROOM, W/CDR. P. R. M., R.A.F., 25 Higher Drive, Banstead, Surrey.

HART, DR NANCIE A., 21 Wilbury Crescent, Hove 3, Sussex.

MAY, REV. E. W. L., R.A.F., c/o Chaplain-in-Chief, Air Ministry, London.

MERRIFIELD, S. W., 67 Green Lane, Copnor, Portsmouth.

SALVIN, JACK, 43 Hamilton Court, Maida Vale, London, W.9.

SCOTT-ELLIOT, MISS A. M., Waverley House, Humshaugh, Northumberland.

SLOMANN, AAGE, Trommesalen 7, Copenhagen V, Denmark.

WINT, MRS F., 55 Bushmead Avenue, Bedford.

(Elected 25 April 1949)

BENNETT, J. G., Coombe Springs, Kingston-on-Thames, Surrey.

CAMPION, S. R., 22 Erridge Road, Merton Park, London, S.W.19.

DUPAIN, G. Z., Rose Bank, 158 Parramatta Road, Ashfield, New South Wales, Australia.

FIELD, MRS L. H., 2010 Glen Drive, Jackson, Michigan, U.S.A.

GAMA, F., Rua Dr Jobim, 38-Eng. Novo, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

JACOBSEN, MRS P., 4982 Queen Mary Road, Montreal, P.Q., Canada.

JONES, MRS M. P. R., Sidbury, Monie Avenue, East Hills, New South Wales, Australia.

OGDEN, R. B., 33 Lemsford Road, St Albans, Herts.

OSBORNE, W. L., Box 87, Thornbury, Ontario, Canada.

PARRY, H. C., 96A Ainslie Street, Grimsby, Lincs.

PEACOCK, D. G., B.Sc., 17 Whyteleafe Road, Caterham, Surrey.

POPE, MRS E., 10 Moorland Rise, King Lane, Leeds 7.

REED, C. J., 22 Frugstreet, Tel-Aviv, Israel.

TRUEMAN, R. S., F.R.C.S., 13 New Africa House, Union Avenue, Salisbury, S. Rhodesia.

WOODWARD, MISS K. M., Coombe Springs, Kingston-on-Thames, Surrey.